

Project Charter

Project Name:	Nebraska Land Records Modernization Study
Project Sponsor:	Chair, Nebraska GIS Steering Committee
Project Coordinator:	Larry K. Zink, Coordinator, Nebraska GIS Steering Committee
Project Purpose:	Recommend a long-range plan for developing and maintaining a digital, geospatial cadastre (land ownership records layer) that is statewide in its scope and compatibility.

Project Overview

A. Business Need

Land ownership is a critical aspect of how our economy and society are organized. A wide range of private entities and state, local and federal agencies need and regularly use property parcel and other land record information. Modern information technologies, like geographic information systems (GIS), have revolutionized the way that land records can be maintained, combined and analyzed with other data, and readily shared across digital networks. Because of the broad-based need, multiple federal, state and regional coordinating bodies have recognized as a priority, the collaborative development of standardized, digital geospatial property parcel data (cadastre).

- The Federal Geographic Data Committee has designed the cadastral data layer as one of its priority "Framework Data Layers".
- The Western Governor Association, (June 2000 policy resolution) noted the importance of land ownership data and "encourages member states, local governments and tribal entities and the private sector to engage in a coordinated effort that will lead to standardized best practices and land record modernization as well as a solid digital cadastral infrastructure."
- The Nebraska Information Technical Commission included in its United 2000, Nebraska's Statewide Technology Plan, a call to, "Develop and adopt strategies for the cooperative intergovernmental development, maintenance and distribution of priority statewide digital geospatial (GIS) databases."
- The Nebraska GIS Steering Committee has noted the importance of ensuring that land record information, "is current and easily accessible to a wide range of users and applications" and has called for "state and local governments to cooperate to insure that the necessary financial and technical resources are available to local governments and that standards are applied so that the data developed are compatible across jurisdictional lines".
- Most recently, the Nebraska Legislature has also noted the importance of land record modernization and has authorized the Nebraska Department of Property Assessment and Taxation to, "institute a program of land record modernization (LB170 - 2001, §77-1342)."

In most of Nebraska, local governments are charged with maintaining land ownership and related records. The accuracy, currency, condition, and methods and procedures for maintaining these land records vary tremendously across the state. Some local governments have the resources and use the latest technology to insure that these records are current and readily accessible. Others, because of a lack of resources, still rely on paper records and maps that are difficult and costly to keep current and share. Many local governments are somewhere in between these extremes. Because of the difficulty of sharing non-digital information, it is not uncommon for multiple agencies to invest scarce public resources to maintain similar, but not necessarily duplicate land records. The wide variation in how these land records are maintained, and in their quality, make it is very difficult for any entity (i.e. NRDs, school districts, state agencies, businesses) that need to use or analyze land record data across

jurisdictional lines. Local governments annually invest considerable public resources maintaining and providing access to these records. However, the absence of a statewide plan for land record modernization means that these on-going expenditures do not necessarily move Nebraska any closer to a quality land record system that is reasonably consistent, is readily accessible and easily shared, and can be integrated across jurisdictional lines.

One of the most promising and cost-effective application areas of GIS technology is the modernization of how local government land records are maintained and accessed. The Nebraska GIS Steering Committee is charged, by statute (§81-2604), with the responsibility to "1) Make recommendations to the Legislature for program initiatives and funding; and 2) Establish guidelines and policies for statewide Geographic Information System operations and management to include the acquisition, development, maintenance, quality assurance such as quality control standards, access, ownership, cost recovery, and priorities of databases;..."

The purpose of this study of Nebraska land records management is to:

- Document and analyze options for creating and maintaining a statewide digital, geospatial property parcel (cadastre) layer and associated land ownership records; and
- Outline the business case for land record modernization;
- Make recommendations related to the institutional arrangements and implement steps necessary to create and maintain this data on a statewide basis.

In developing and evaluating recommendations for a long-range land record modernization plan the following goals should be included:

- Economy
- Quality
- Accessibility and compatibility across the state
- Flexibility in meeting new requirements

B. Scope and Objectives

This study is part of a planning process for deciding how to develop and maintain a statewide digital cadastre. This study includes an assessment of the current situation, an evaluation of alternative institutional arrangements, a solicitation of feedback from key interests on alternative models, and the development and documentation of a recommended long-range plan/model for statewide land record modernization. It is not the intent of the study to create a detailed implementation plan.

Specific objectives for the study include:

1. Review the range of institutional models for land record modernization in selected states and document the more successful programs and/or approaches (administrative structures, funding, control structures, coordination structures and procedures, related statutory or regulatory language, standards, costs, satisfaction)
2. Research and report on the status of existing land record maintenance in Nebraska's political jurisdictions by conducting a 3-4 tier survey of (25-35) political jurisdictions (status of current maps; status of tabular land records; estimated annual expenditures for updating, for providing access, method of updating, estimated costs for major revision)
3. Conduct interviews with key stakeholders to determine issues and concerns related to land record modernization.
4. Identify problems/needs and opportunities for enhancing the current land record system(s) in Nebraska
5. Outline alternative models for possible Nebraska land record modernization effort, including such factors as costs, funding, control, coordination, timeline, political feasibility, etc., of the different organizational approaches or models.

6. Present findings to a meeting of representatives of key stakeholders (NACO, League, NPAT, GPRO, Leg., CIO, GIS Str. Cmte., NARD, SSO) and solicit their ideas and feedback.
7. Develop a recommendation for a long-range plan to develop and maintain statewide digital, geospatial property parcel data, including structural/institutional arrangements, estimated costs, funding, standards, implementation steps, timelines, etc.

C. Deliverables

Deliverables include:

1. Project work plan
2. A summary report on leading institutional models for land record modernization in selected states (administrative structures, funding, control structures, coordination structures and procedures, related statutory or regulatory language, standards, costs, satisfaction)
3. A summary report of interviews with key stakeholders to determine issues and concerns related to land record modernization
4. A summary report on the status of existing land record maintenance in Nebraska's political jurisdictions based on a 3-4 tier survey of (25-35) counties/cities (status of current maps; status of tabular land records; estimated annual expenditures for updating, for providing access, methods for updating, estimated costs for major revision)
5. A report outlining the problems/needs related to the current land record maintenance system(s) in Nebraska, including the issues and concerns of the key stakeholders, and identifying opportunities for enhancing the current system(s) and alternative models for a possible Nebraska land record modernization effort, outlining such factors as (costs, funding, control, coordination, timeline, political feasibility, etc.) for each of the different organizational approaches or models.
6. Facilitated meeting of key stakeholders (urban/rural NACO, League, NPAT, GPRO, Leg., CIO, GIS Str. Cmte., NARD, SSO) to present the findings and solicit and record feedback)
7. Draft report including a recommended long-range plan/model for the development and maintenance of statewide digital, geospatial property parcel data, including structural/institutional arrangements, estimated costs, funding, standards, implementation steps, timelines, and business case for land record modernization
8. Briefing on the draft report to the Advisory Committee for the Nebraska Land Record Modernization Study
9. Final report

D. Methodology

Information will be gathered through interviews, surveys, facilitated meetings, and existing documentation. Content will be based on the collective knowledge and experience of participants. The project leader (contractor) will provide expertise on land information systems planning, business area analysis, and institutional collaboration.

The work plan will specify meetings and other methods for gathering information.

The Study Advisory Committee will oversee management of the study to insure the scope, deliverables, timeline and budget. The Study Advisory Committee will help address problems that could affect the successful completion of the study.

The Nebraska GIS Steering Committee will have final approval over the content and recommendations in the study's final report.

Project Management

A. Project Sponsor

The Project Sponsor must approve the project charter.

B. Project Coordinators

The project coordinator has responsibility for overseeing the study and resolving any issues that might arise. The Coordinator for the GIS Steering Committee will serve as the liaison with GIS Steering Committee and its member organizations.

C. Advisory Committee Duties

The Advisory Committee for the Nebraska Land Record Modernization Study serves in an advisory capacity to the Nebraska GIS Steering Committee. The advisory committee will oversee the study and will make recommendations to the Nebraska GIS Steering Committee based on the study. Members of the steering committee will assist the study in providing information, identifying key stakeholders, reviewing draft documents, and participating in work sessions, subject to available time and other constraints.

D. Study Advisory Committee Members

Jim Brown, State Surveyor and Chair of Nebraska GIS Steering Committee
Duane Stott, Scotts Bluff County Surveyor and V. Chair of the Nebraska GIS Steering Committee
Cathy Lang, Property Tax Administrator, State of Nebraska
Steve Schafer, Chief Information Officer, State of Nebraska
Dan Hoffman, Governor's Policy Research Office

E. Project Personnel

(Still being identified)

1. (Contactor), Project leader and expert advisor
2. Larry Zink, assist with project management, facilitation and drafting documents
3. State agency personnel to assist with surveys and interviews

F. Project Tracking and Reporting

The Advisory Committee for the Land Record Modernization Study will report to the project sponsor through publication of its minutes and special briefings, as requested. The project coordinator will monitor progress against the project work plan and will meet periodically with the project leader (contractor).

G. Timeframe

The goal is to finish the study by July 1, 2002.

H. Funding and Budget Outline

The funding for this study will be provided by through the Information Management Services Division of DAS, on behalf of the Nebraska GIS Steering Committee, through a reimbursable agreement with the U.S. Geological Survey. This does not include in-kind services, indirect costs, or other expenses of participating agencies. Any cost of the study must be incurred prior to September 30, 2002.

Human Resources/Consulting (for facilitating process and developing LRM plan	\$45,000
Travel	4,000
Meeting Expenses	500
Printing	500
Total	\$50,000

I. Quality Assurance

The project coordinator will monitor the quality of work. The Nebraska GIS Steering Committee will have ultimate responsibility over content of the reports, with the Study's Advisory Committee working with the contractor to develop a final draft report for the Steering Committee's consideration.

J. Risk Management

A project of this type entails several risks. One is the time constraints. The project proposes to manage this risk by retaining a highly qualified individual as the project leader (contractor). A second source of risk is the limited funds available. The project will make effective use of funds by closely managing the scope and by leveraging the efforts of the contractor with assistance by the GIS Steering Committee Coordinator on some tasks and the CIO and/or staff of NPAT or SSO on others. A third risk is the cooperation of participants who must contribute their time through interviews and meetings. The best solution to this risk is the active support of the GIS Steering Committee member agencies, seeking early support and endorsement of the study by NACO and the League and a project scope that will provide clear benefits to the organization. A fourth risk is maintaining focus. The original purpose of the study is to document and analyze options for creating and maintaining a statewide digital cadastral layer, including recommended institutional arrangements and implementation steps. The project will manage this risk by providing clear instructions to the project leader (contractor) and through close monitoring by the project coordinator and Study Advisory Committee.

CHARTER APPROVAL

I have reviewed the contents of this charter.

My signature below establishes a commitment to the contents of this charter and to the successful completion of this project.

Jim Brown, State Surveyor and Chair NGISSC

Date: _____

Duane Stott, Scotts Bluff County Surveyor and V.Chair

Date: _____

Cathy Lang, Property Tax Administrator, St. of Nebr.

Date: _____

Steve Schafer, Chief Information Officer, St. of Nebr.

Date: _____

Dan Hoffman, Governor's Policy Research Office, St. of Nebr.

Date: _____